

1. An apparatus for viewing at least one intelligent design using at least one computer, said apparatus comprising:

multiple format readers for reading at least one intelligent design in at least one of multiple formats;

a format verifier, linked to the format readers, that automatically employs at least one appropriate format reader from the format readers to read the intelligent designs independent of an explicit user intervention;

an import application-programming interface linked to the format verifier for importing the drawing in the applicable format for viewing the intelligent design; and

a memory resident data model, linked to the import application-programming interface, is a database for storing the properties and functional characteristics of the intelligent design.

2. The apparatus for viewing at least one intelligent design in claim 1 further comprising:

a query application-programming interface, linked to the memory resident data model, for presenting data objects to other instances of the apparatus; and

a user interface, linked to the query application-programming interface, for interactively accessing the memory resident data model.

3. The apparatus for viewing at least one intelligent design in claim 2 further comprising at least one format writer, linked to the query application-programming interface, for scripting within the invention thereby allowing the user to control local configuration and behavior of the user interface.

4. The apparatus for viewing at least one intelligent design in claim 1 further comprising a collaborative network element, linked by at least one medium to the memory resident data model, for using the apparatus across a global computer network.

5. A method for viewing at least one intelligent design using at least one computer and a software application, said method comprising:

initiating the software application;

selecting an intelligent design file;

searching for a parser which is used to identify a means for opening the intelligent design file;

loading at least one intelligent design from the intelligent design file using the parser; and

browsing the intelligent design.

6. The method for viewing at least one intelligent design of claim 5 further comprising:

loading at least one default annotation file; and

loading at least one scripted annotation file.

7. The method for viewing at least one intelligent design of claim 5 further comprising:

selecting an overlay file;

searching for a parser for the overlay file; and

loading the overlay file.

8. The method for viewing at least one intelligent design of claim 5 further comprising:

modifying the intelligent design loaded from the intelligent design file.

9. The method for viewing at least one intelligent design of claim 8 wherein multiple users on separate computers concurrently and collaboratively modify the intelligent design loaded from the intelligent design file.